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No. 2

GANAPATI.

By

M. S. Sundara Sarma B. A.

(Illustrated.)

By

The Author himself.

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K.P. Sundara Sarma

GANAPATI.

Look at the drawing on the opposite page; I am sure you know who he is? He has the head of an elephant placed over a body like yours; but has a big belly and four arms. You know he is called Ganapati. But who is he?

I will tell you who he is, as also how and to whom he was born. The Asuras and the Rakshasas performed many sacrifices and obtained several boons as a reward for the same, from the great God Siva. But when they had obtained the boons they began to live in wicked ways and gave trouble to the Devas. The Devas were unable to bear the mischief and they could do nothing against these Asuras, for they had obtained their boons from Siva himself; so all the Devas including their

chief Indra himself, went to Siva—the mighty God, and appealed to him for help by way of creating a god who will throw obstacles in the way of the Asuras and the Rakshasas. Siva yielded to their prayer and by virtue of his great power brought forth a resplendant child whom he named Vigneswara, because he was to be the lord of Vignams or obstacles.

Parvathi the wife of Siva had hitherto no attendant of her own, although she had Nandi and others, given to her by Siva to serve her; she wanted to have one solely for herself. So she took this newly born god to serve her as her attendant.

One day Parvathi was bathing in a tank and had placed her faithful attendant Ganapati, at the entrance, to prevent any one from disturbing her bath., Siva, wishing to see his consort, approached her; but Ganapati who was alert at the gate, would not allow him inside. Siva grew

angry and tried to force himself in; but the young guard gave him a few cuts with his cane and drove him out. Siva called in his host of demons to fight with this new attendant of Parvathi but Ganesa proved himself more than a match for all of them and they were all defeated. Vishnu, Subramania and others came to help Siva; but all in vain. Vishnu, finding that direct attacks were of no avail, caused confusion with the help of his wonderful Maya; Siva took advantage of the confusion and it became easy for him to cut off the head of Vigneswara.

The sage Narada, who is ever watchful, went to Parvathi and told her of what had happened to her faithful attendant and child. She became so angry that she created thousands of goddesses to give trouble to all those who took part in fighting with Ganesa. All the gods now felt miserable; Narada, that wisest sage took

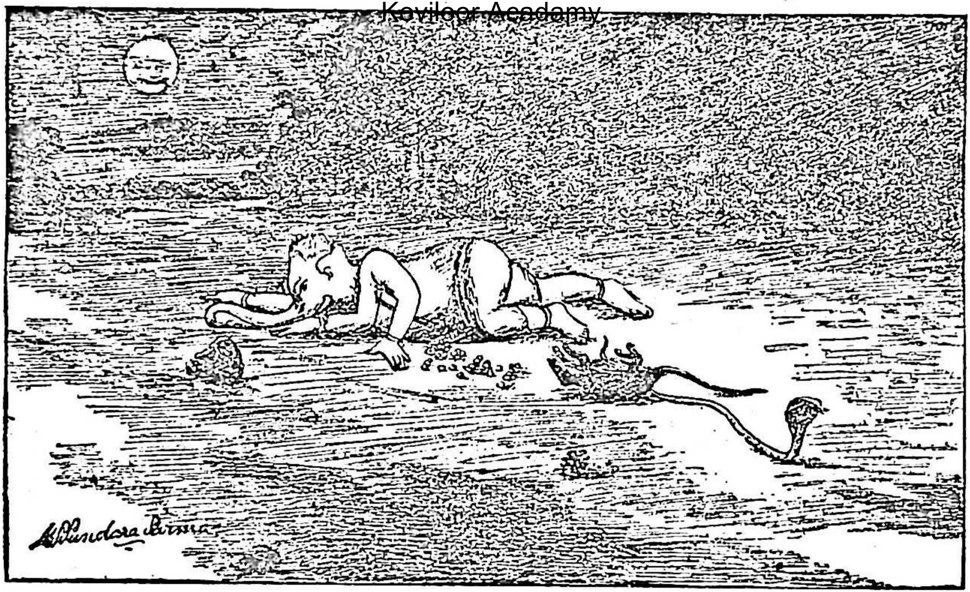
pity on the sad condition of the gods and pleaded on their behalf to the great Mother; she promised to restore peace if her son be brought back to life. Siva, on hearing this sorry fate of his own son, ordered the gods to proceed northwards and to bring the head of the first living being they met, and to fix it on the body of Ganesa. They went forth as directed and came accross an young elephant, the son of Irawada the elephant of Indra; at once they took its head, carried it home and fixed it over the headless trunk of Ganesa; Ganesa at once got back his lost life and Parvathi being much pleased with that took him to Siva. Ganesa bowed in reverence to his divine father Siva and apologised for his past behaviour But Siva was much pleased with his faithful conduct and thence forth, gave him the command of his demon-hosts and called him Ganapathi.

Young reader! all this may seem to you to be mere stories! Never mind. Cherish them as such while you are young but when you grow old and study deeply our ancient lore you will indeed then know that, what you have now learnt in the shape of stories are the greatest truths expressing the highest wisdom.

This Ganapati you know, is worshiped by all of us every time we begin anything, for he is the lord of .obstacles and if you pray to him at the beginning of any undertaking, he will surely remove all obstacles. Many boys fail in their examination now-a-days, because they do not worship and pray to Ganesa. Only pray to him and think of him when you do anything and see what success attend you!

In the picture you see Ganesa with a snake tied round his belly. He has tied it round like a belt that some of you use. Do you know why he wears it? Once

upon a time he was invited for a dinner. You know Ganesa is very fond of cakes. He ate too much of them. His belly became too full. After the feast he mounted his little charger, the mouse and rode back homewards; It was late in the evening and the moon was rising. The overburdened little mouse on its way stumbled over a snake that was airing itself on the way. The little mouse was hurt and the stout rider was hurled down breaking his belly on the floor; all the cakes he had swallowed came out and were scattered on the floor. Poor Ganesa became very angry; he picked up one by one the cakes and put them back into his belly but his broken belly would not keep them; so he caught hold of the very snake that gave him this trouble and tied it round his belly. That is the reason why you see the snake, there, round his belly serving as if it were a girdle.



You may observe in the picture that Ganesa has only one tusk. The other one is broken. I will now tell you why it is so Some people say that when the great sage Vyasa composed the Mahabaratha he requested Ganesa to write it down for him and that to do so Ganesa plucked out one of his pointed tusks to be used as a stile; but others say a different story altogether and that is this: When Ganesa fell down from the mouse as was told a few pages back, the moon who was then rising saw it and laughed at it. When Ganesa heard that laughter he became very very angry, plucked one of his tusks and hurled it at the moon. When the tusk hit the moon she lost all her splendour and the whole world became dark; All the Rishis and the Devas went to Ganesa and requested him to subdue his anger and alter the evil fate of the moon. Ganesa partly consented and made the moon grow and wane alternately. The

moon even today remembers this punishment and that is the reason why even now she never laughs at many a blunder committed in her presence.

I will now tell you how wise and learned this Ganapathi is even though he has the face of an elephant He has a brother who is called Subramania. They both were young but when they came of age, their parents Parvathi and Siva wanted to have them married; but doubt arose as to which one of them should be first married. Siva and Parvathi put their heads together and came to the conclusion that of them, he who went round the earth and came first should be married first. They both started but Ganesa halted in front of his parents while Subramania his brother, went away very fast in the hope of winning the race. Ganesa waited till he was out of sight and then made seven pradakshinams round his

parents and then quoted the text from the Vedas that 'he who makes seven circuits round his parents obtained the same benefit as going round the world once.' Siva and Parvathi highly pleased with his learning, declared that he bas more than won the race Subramania when he returned found to his discomfiture that his brother by his knowledge had won the race. So he determined to learn the Vedas himself, took the vow of celebacy and went away on his pea-cock to a secluded hight. That is the reason why even to-day you find his shrines are on the tops of mountains where he even now is devoting his time to the study of the Vedas.

I will now tell you how kind and helping was this Ganesa to his brother Subramania. Subramania had finished his course of study and was in search of a consort One day while he had assumed

the form of a sanyasin a fair damsel was bestowed upon him for attendance He fell in love with her. But as a sanyasin he could not marry her. So he assumed the form of an old man and then approached the young and beautiful girl but the girl was loathe to marry an old man who was as it were with a foot on the grave. The old man who was really Subramania in disguise thought of his brother Ganesa Vigneswara to remove the obstacles on his way. The very moment Ganesa was there and stretched out his proboscis from behind a tree near which the girl was standing. This beautiful girl was afraid of nothing else than an elephant and the moment she saw the proboscis, she was terrified and had to seek the protection of the old man there whom she had hitherto successfully evaded. The old man hugged her close by way of protecting her and smoothed her fears. He then made her vow that she would marry him and then



asked his brother to go away. He then assumed his real shape to the greatest joy of the fair maiden. That is how Ganapati showed his kindness and love for his brother Subramania.

Dear reader you are as good a brother to Ganesa as Subramania is, for you too are the son of the same heavenly parents, so that if you want to have anything done for which there are some obstacles think as even Subramania did, of Ganapati, and he will surely be by your side and remove all obstacles.

I told you before that Ganesa was married but I did not tell you to whom he was married. Siva and Parvathi selected for him two damsels named Buddhi and Siddhi. To Buddhi was born Kshema; and to Siddhi was born Labha.

They are all living now together and never part from one another. So that if you invoke the blessings of Ganapati, he will surely be with you and bring also with him Buddhi and Siddhi as also Kshema and Labha.

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